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ABSTRACT

This report details findings of the seventh annual (2002-2003) national survey of the attitudes and plans of American adolescents. Participating in the telephone survey was a nationally representative sample of 1,003 students aged 13 to 18, in ninth through twelfth grade. The report summarizes findings "at a glance" and discusses findings under the following broad headings: (1) "Schools Are No Better, No Worse"; (2) "Students' Support Network Is Strong"; (3) "Effects of September 11 Are Still Felt"; and (4) "College Is a Priority for the Future." Among the key findings, the report notes that high school students continue to give their school a B- average rating, with the ratings strongly resembling the grades students report for themselves. Most students say their school is doing enough to keep them safe and secure during the school day. They continue to be torn between their studies and other demands on their time. More than one-third have a job outside school. Ninety percent of students report that they have at least one family member in whom they can confide about personal matters. Students were divided on whom they preferred to spend their free time with. Few students select a role model outside their immediate circle of contacts. A substantial proportion of students declared the September 11 terrorist attacks on America as the single most significant event they have lived through. Students' reactions to the war on terror were remarkably positive. More than 80 percent of students said that attending college was at least very important to being successful later in life, with nearly all seeing some type of college in their future. The report includes data tables. (KB)

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STATE OF OUR NATION'S YOUTH

2002-2003

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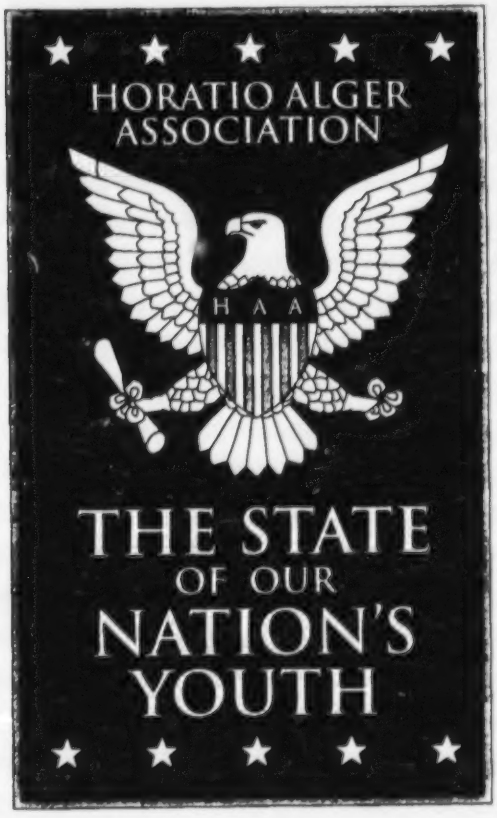

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HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc.
99 Canal Center Plaza
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone (703) 684-9444 Fax (703) 548-3822

www.horatioalger.com

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The State of Our Nation's Youth is an annual effort to give voice to what's on the minds and in the hearts of our country's young people. In understanding this important project, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is honored to have partners who share our dedication to bringing the hopes, dreams, opinions, and concerns of our children to the attention of our nation.

First and foremost, the Association is grateful to its Board of Directors and all its Members for their strong, continuing commitment to this effort. We extend a special note of appreciation to Ambassador & Mrs. George L. Argyros, Mr. Terry M. Giles, Mr. & Mrs. H. Wayne Huizenga, Mr. & Mrs. Richard L. Knowlton, Mr. & Mrs. James R. Moffett, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Neubauer, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Scott, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Washington, and Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Welters

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Our thanks and appreciation goes to the educators who helped select our student panel: Kay E. Baker, Director, Pat May Staff Development Center, Hurst Euless-Bedford Independent School District, Bedford, Texas; Ron Nicola, Chairman, Social Studies Department, Livermore High School, Livermore, California; Wally Hayes; Former Executive Director, Maine Association of Student Councils, Westbrook, Maine; Vicki Baker, Associate Superintendent of North Kansas City School District, North Kansas, Missouri; and William Parrish, President, William Clay Parrish, Jr. Foundation, Vienna, Virginia.

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INTRODUCTION

The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is pleased to present the results of its 2002-2003 *State of Our Nation's Youth* survey. Each year, the Association conducts a survey of America's young people between the ages of 14 and 18. Our objective is to learn what is on their minds so that we may better understand and assist America's youth. The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is pleased to make its findings available to educators and the community at large.

The Association was founded in 1947 for the purpose of recognizing and celebrating Americans who have overcome adversity to achieve success through hard work and persistence. With the presentation of the Horatio Alger Award, the Association salutes Americans as role models for young people because they have experienced the opportunities afforded by our nation's free enterprise system. Through the generosity of our members, the Horatio Alger Association presents more than $4 million annually in college scholarships to promising high school seniors who, like the Association's members, have overcome some of life's most difficult challenges.

The *State of Our Nation's Youth Report* is another means through which the Horatio Alger Association endeavors to assist young people. By giving voice to teenagers' thoughts, concerns, opinions, and aspirations, we gain a better understanding of how our culture affects young people and how we might best serve them. The Association has been pleased to work with the firm of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., in conducting this year's back-to-school survey. With their assistance, the 2002-2003 *State of Our Nation's Youth* report incorporates responses from youth balanced to reflect the gender, geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic makeup of the United States.

Our young people are our nation's future, and in light of these survey findings, that future is indeed bright. While these findings are overall very positive, there are issues that should be of concern to adults. The more we understand, the better prepared we will be to support young Americans on their journey to responsible adulthood.

H. Wayne Huizenga
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Chairman Emeritus

Joseph Neubauer
Chairman,
Capital Campaign
& Long Range

At A Glance

Schools No Better, No Worse

	A's	B's	C's	D's/ F's
Students report their grades	22%	43%	29%	6%
Students grade their schools	17%	51%	22%	9%

	Agree	Disagree
My school is doing enough to keep me safe and secure during the school day	81%	17%

	A Priority	Secondary
Homework	45%	48%

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Hours per week on homework	60%	25%	7%	5%

	Very	Some-what	Not That	Not At All
Students' involvement in their schools	28%	44%	15%	12%

STUDENTS' SUPPORT NETWORK

	Applies To Me
There is at least one family member who I can confide in and talk to about things	90%
At least one teacher or administrator personally cares about my success	89%
It is important to most of my teachers and administrators that I do my best in school	87%
I can talk to at least one teacher or administrator about my school problems	74%

	Their Mother	Their Father	Both Parents	Step-Parent	Neither Parent
Students live with:	85%	60%	54%	10%	8%

	Family	Friend	Entertainer	Teacher
Students identify role models	42%	16%	12%	8%

	Problem	Not A Problem
Pressure to get good grades	72%	28%
Family problems	51%	49%
Financial pressure	48%	52%
Pressure to look a certain way	45%	55%
Loneliness or feeling left out	35%	64%
Pressure to do drugs or drink	34%	66%
Pressure to have sex	32%	68%

SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS

	Agree
Most significant event in my lifetime	66%
One of several significant events	33%

	Great Deal	Fair Amount	Just A Little	None
Impact on students' lives	20%	35%	33%	12%

	Applies To Me
I feel closer to my family	69%
I have prayed, meditated, reflected	66%
I have flown a flag	63%
I have been frustrated because I can't do more	53%
I have looked for a way to help	47%
I have had new ideas/changed plans	32%

	Percentage Of Students
Feel hopeful and optimistic about future	73%
Feel worried and pessimistic about future	23%

COLLEGE IS A PRIORITY

	Critical	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important
Importance of college for success	30%	53%	15%	2%

	Agree
Want to learn more about other cultures	66%
Already know enough	16%
Doesn't really matter	17%

	Four-Year School	Two-Year School	Other Type Of School	No Plans To Attend
Plans for college	66%	10%	13%	11%

	Applies To Me
Would prefer a school within driving distance	56%
Would prefer a school that I can afford without taking loans, even if it has a lesser reputation	51%

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DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS

	Very Important For Success
Having close family relationships	78%
Having a close group of friends	56%
Making a contribution to society	51%
Making a lot of money	44%
Having an active spiritual life	43%
Being famous or respected	28%
Being attractive and popular	9%

OVERVIEW

The 2001-2002 academic year brought several events of worldwide importance, events that greatly affected America's high school students. The importance of September 11 is reflected in students' increasing involvement as citizens of the world and in their increasing focus as students. It is clear that high school students are simultaneously aware of the world around them and upbeat about its prospects.

Students enter their schools this fall no less hopeful for the future, no less interested in the world, and no less committed to meeting the challenges ahead. Much like their parents, they have responded positively to the challenges created by terrorism. Students translate these events into positive actions. Rather than sitting back and believing that they have nothing to offer to help the situations facing them, students are confident that they can make a difference and that things will only get better with time.

September 11 and its surrounding events have made students more goal-oriented, more aware of world issues, and for some, more likely to reconsider their career plans. While feelings on some measures have changed little in the past year, most students exhibit greater recognition that more will be expected of them. They appear pragmatic and ready to respond to those challenges.

Even with everything students have witnessed in the past year, they are not so world-weary that they have lost sight of what it means to be a teenager in high school. Students still must choose between completing required classwork and participating in dozens of other activities that compete for their time. They confront challenges at home and deal with several significant forms of peer pressure. More than anything else, they confidently look forward to futures that promise both excitement and uncertainty. Here, the old phrase applies: the more things change, the more they stay the same.

SCHOOLS NO BETTER, NO WORSE

Last year's education legislation may have changed the shape of America's schools, but its effects have yet to be felt by American students. High school students continue to give their schools a B- average. More than half of students rate their schools as a B, and slightly more students offer Cs than offer As. The survey findings offer good news for schools, as fewer than one in ten students assess their school as below average, giving it a D or a failing grade. The grades students give their schools strongly resemble the grades they report for themselves.

One area in which schools succeed is safety. Most students say that their school is doing enough to keep them safe and secure during the school day. This finding is particularly significant given the continued incidences of school violence and the fears invoked by the September 11 attacks. When asked about the areas in which they would like to see their schools do more to keep them safe, students most often cite keeping drugs out of school. They also mention stopping bullies from picking on other students and screening students to make sure that they are not carrying weapons into school.

Students continue to report being torn between their studies and other demands on their time. Nearly half of students say that their schoolwork is a priority and that they complete it before turning to other activities, but the other half of students say that know they should spend more time on homework but never seem to find the time. Barely more than one in ten students spend more than ten hours a week on homework, but nearly three in four say that they are at least somewhat involved in other activities at their school. More than one-third of students have a job outside school.

STUDENTS' SUPPORT NETWORK IS STRONG

In 2002, students again report that they can count on their families, teachers, and administrators as someone who cares about their future and to whom they can talk. Nine in ten students say that they have at least one family member to whom they can talk and confide in about personal matters. Three-quarters of students say that they have at least one teacher or administrator to whom they can talk about personal problems.

In terms of students' families, slightly more than half of students live in traditional two-parent households. Single-parent households are lead disproportionately by single mothers, particularly in minority homes. Students in these households, however, are no less likely to say that they have the support of a family member in whom they can confide their personal problems.

Students are divided on whom they prefer to spend their free time with and whom their social circles comprise. Slightly more than half say that they have a group of friends that they hang out with, but significant proportions say they hang out with just one or two close friends or prefer to spend their time with their families.

Given the support students receive from their families and the proportion who choose to spend their free time at home, it is not surprising that more than four in ten students choose a family member as their role model. Among those students, more choose their mother as a role model than any other family member, followed by fathers, siblings, and grandparents. After family members, friends or family friends are the next most common role models for high school students. For all the talk about a lack of positive role models for today's youth and about sports stars or entertainers serving as role models, this survey finds that few students name a role model outside their immediate circle of contacts.

Students say that these support networks are a very important aspect of their lives. They report feeling pressured in many areas, including at school, at home, and socially. More than seven in ten say that the pressure to get good grades is a problem for them, and more than half say that they have family problems or difficulty getting along with their parents. Financial pressure and pressure to look a certain way also are common problems.

Effects Of September 11 Are Still Felt

When students compare September 11 to other events in their lifetime, a declining but still substantial proportion declare the attacks to be the single-most significant event they have lived through so far. In November 2001, three in four students said that September 11 was the single-most significant event of their lifetime, even when compared with events such as the Gulf War, the Oklahoma City bombing, and President Clinton's impeachment. Since last November that number has decreased to two-thirds.

Although the proportion of students saying that September 11 is the most significant day of their life has decreased, no fewer students claim a direct impact on their life. More than half say that the attacks have affected their lives directly at least a fair amount. Only slightly more than one in ten say that the attacks have not affected them at all.

Students' reactions to September 11 and the war on terror are remarkably positive. Strong majorities report feeling closer to their families, praying, meditating or spending time in spiritual reflections, flying a flag, and feeling frustrated because they cannot do more to help. Nearly half of students report that they personally are looking for a way to contribute to the recovery effort. This proportion is down from last November's marks, but still is significant.

College Is A Priority For The Future

More than four in five students say that attending college is at least very important to being successful later in life. They continue to believe in the power of a higher degree. They consider learning about current events and other cultures important and think that classes and homework are the best means of doing so.

Nearly all students see some type of college in their future. Most of them plan to pursue their degree at a four-year college or university, but more than one in five have post-high school education plans that do not fit the traditional mold. Significant proportions of students also plan to attend two-year colleges, community colleges, or training or vocational schools.

Students have realistic expectations of how college life will differ from their current lifestyles. Nearly all of them expect a change in the amount of homework they have to do. More than half expect their incomes and their independence to

change. About one in three students expect their social circles, their relationships with their families, or the temptation to take drugs or alcohol to change.

Students are both excited and nervous as they anticipate these changes. They are the most excited about newfound freedom and independence, and the most nervous about the amount of schoolwork they will be assigned. It is interesting that nearly equal proportions of students are looking ahead to changes in their incomes with excitement and apprehension.

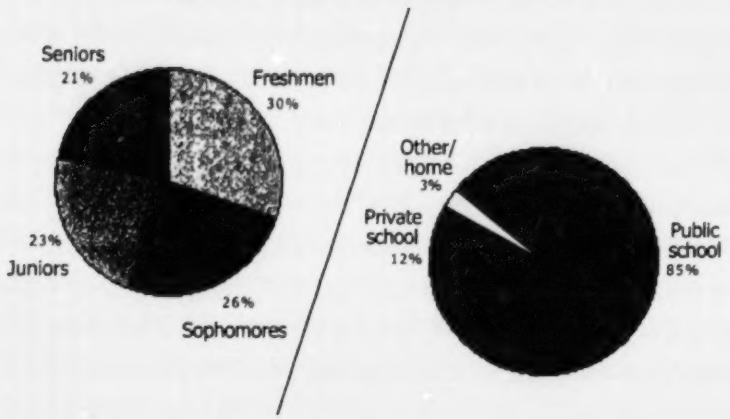
Regardless of the students' college goals or expectations, their standards for success are consistent. They reject traditional benchmarks of success and instead look to strong relationships as their personal measurement of achievement. Above making money or being famous, students say that they will mark their success with strong families relationships and a close group of friends.

A Portrait of America's Youth

As was the case last year, "diverse" is the best word to describe America's youth in 2002. This year's State of Our Nation's Youth survey results reveal a teenage population that is wide-ranging in its academic experiences, family backgrounds, and future plans. The poll findings expose several interesting patterns among different groups of youths, but offer no universal predictors for behaviors or priorities. The only true commonality among all students in this survey is a view of their futures that mixes excitement with nervous anticipation.

The State of Our Nation's Youth survey captures the opinions of students attending grades nine to twelve. Factors such as early graduation and dropout rates tilt the high school population toward the younger grades, and the survey sample reflects that fact. One in three (30%) students represented in this survey is in the ninth grade, which is middle school in some school districts, but most often is referred to as freshman year. Sophomores make up 26% of survey respondents, juniors make up 23%, and seniors make up 21%.

Snapshot Of American High School Students

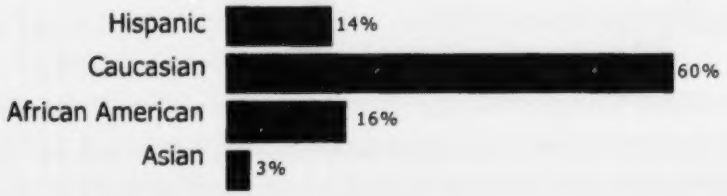


The vast majority (85%) of American high school students attend public schools. Among those who choose not to attend a public school, the most common choice is a private religious school. Nine percent of high school students attend a school that they identify as private and religious. An additional 2% say they attend a private non-religious school, 1% say they attend a boarding school, 1% receive home schooling, and 2% say they attend some other type of school.

In keeping with more general American demographics, the highest proportion (32%) of American high school students live and attend school in cities. Small towns also host approximately one-third of all high school students (30%). A quarter (26%) of high school students live in suburbs, while only 10% describe their hometown as a rural area.

Glimpsing America's Future:

Ethnic Distribution Of High School Students



Although the survey does not ask students to approximate their parents' incomes, it does ask them to guess as to where their household income places them compared with the "average income." Four in ten (41%) students guess that their family's income is just about average. Only 20% of students that their family's income is below average, but 35% identify their family's income as above average.

America's high school students continue to outpace their adult counterparts in terms of racial and ethnic diversity. Perhaps offering a glimpse of what America will look like in the coming years, fully two in five high school students identify with an ethnic background other than Caucasian. Fourteen percent say they are from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background, 16% are from an African-

American background, and 9% identify themselves with some other ethnic or racial origin. Comparatively, 75% of Americans of all ages reported their race as Caucasian on the 2000 Census.

In terms of the grades they earn, two in ten (22%) students claim to have nearly straight A's on their report cards. Slightly more than one-third (35%) of students say they earn a mix of A's and B's, and 23% of students say they earn a mix of B's and C's. Only 12% admit to earning mostly C's or below. These grades are very similar to the ones reported in 2001.

Indeed, in most of the demographic measurements captured by this survey, this year's high school students look very similar to last year's students.

FINDINGS

The 2002 State of Our Nation's Youth survey finds a student body with more to complain about than last year's group, but with no less optimism about their futures. For decades, standard rhetoric has held that American teenagers are apathetic to anything that does not affect them directly, unaware of the larger world, and unwilling to think past graduation. The 2002 State of Our Nation's Youth survey findings reveal a generation of high school students willing to defy those stereotypes.

The events of the past year have affected America's high school students profoundly. High school students have been paying attention. They are taking notes and they are processing what they hear. Remarkably, despite the negative news, students are reacting in positive ways. It would be easy for teenagers to lose faith in many of the same institutions now being questioned by American adults, and indeed, the teenagers in this survey express a healthy degree of skepticism. Their skepticism, however, is matched by optimism and confidence that time and hard work will fix whatever challenges they face.

Of course, today's high school students face the same difficulties as students before them. They fight with their parents, worry about the way they look, and struggle to balance classes and extracurricular activities. These challenges combine with other elements of their lives, such as home life, jobs outside of school, and social lives, to influence how they see the world. In planning their careers, students value relationships with their family and friends above making money or achieving fame, but the scales are shifting slightly. In examining the attitudes that emerge from the 2002 State of Our Nation's Youth survey, it is important to take all these factors into account.

SCHOOLS ARE NO BETTER, NO WORSE

Despite landmark changes in education law since last year's survey, high school students have not changed their assessments of the schools they attend. In 2001, high school students gave their schools a 2.7 grade point average. In 2002, the grades are largely the same, and again average to a 2.7, or an overall B-. Nearly seven in ten (68%) students put their school on the honor roll, awarding it either an A or a B. Seventeen percent give their school top honors by awarding an A. Slightly more than one in five (22%) students rate their school as average. One in ten (9%) give their school a below-average grade, with 6% assigning a D and 3% assigning an F.

The type of area in which students live makes little difference in their opinion of their school. For all the press about the declining quality of city schools, urban, suburban, and rural students give their schools remarkably similar grades. Students' race also does not affect their opinions of their school's performance. The degree to which a student is involved in his or her school does, however, substantially affect their feelings. Students who describe themselves as being very involved in their school are 20 percentage points more likely to give their school an A than are students who say they are not involved at all.

Schools Get Average Grades Overall

Spring 2002

Schools' Report Card

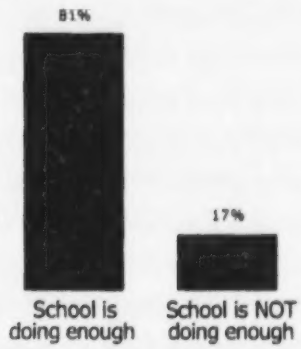
	May 2002	May 2001
A	17%	20%
B	51%	48%
C	22%	22%
D	6%	6%
F	3%	4%
GPA	2.7	2.7

A remarkable proportion of students say that their school is doing enough to keep them safe and secure during the school day. Fully eight in ten (81%) students say that schools are doing enough. Men tend to feel safer than do women, and suburban students tend to feel safer than do urban students. Considering the anxiety provoked by recent acts of school shootings as well as the September 11 attacks, however, the fact that such a high proportion of students endorse their school's efforts to keep them safe speaks highly of the measures taken by American schools to prevent violence.

It is somewhat surprising that when students are asked to pick one or two areas in which their school could do more to keep them safe and secure, they choose keeping drugs out of the school as their top priority (33%). Keeping drugs out of school tops even stopping bullies from picking on other students (26%) as the issue that they would most like to see their school improve. Students also would like to see schools focus more on screening students for weapons (24%), preventing outside people from coming on campus during the day (19%), and offering more classes to teach tolerance (18%).

Schools Get High Marks For Safety

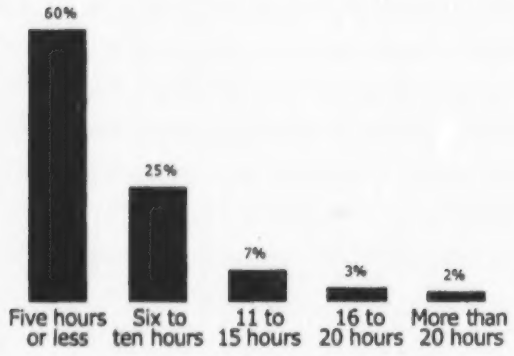
Is your school doing enough to keep you safe and secure during the school day?



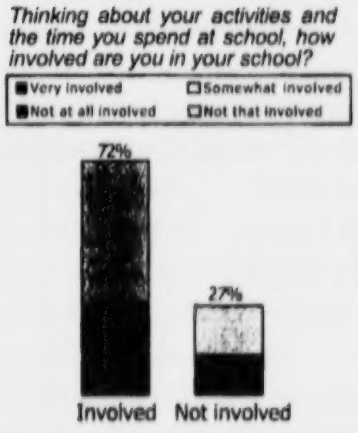
In 2002, students continue the struggle to balance their academic lives with other commitments. Academic pressure, activities pressure, and job pressures are very much apparent. Six in ten (60%) students say that they spend fewer than five hours a week doing homework. One-quarter (25%) of students spend six to ten hours a week on their homework. Only 12% of students say they spend more than ten hours a week outside of class on their studies. Conversely, upon considering the activities in which they participate, 28% of students say they are very involved in their schools. Only 27% of students say that they are not that involved, or not involved at all. Additionally, more than one-third of high school students worked at an after-school job during the past school year.

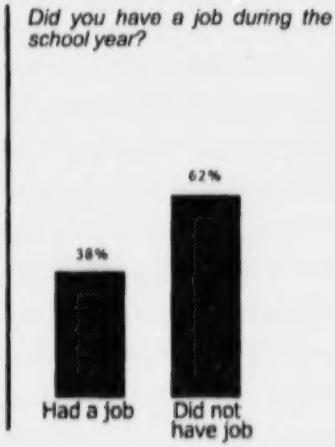
Students Put Energy Into Studies

Hours per week spent doing homework



And They Put Energy Into Extracurricular Activities





When students think about all their commitments together, nearly half admit that although they know that they should do more homework, they never seem to have the time. The other half (45%) of students say that homework is their priority and they complete it before participating in other activities. Interestingly, students who are very involved in their schools are more likely to say that they complete their homework before other activities than are students who are not involved in their schools. As one would expect, those with higher marks in school are more likely to report their studies as their first priority.

This year students were asked to weigh in on several new education developments. As a central element of last year's education-reform legislation, standardized testing has been a hot topic of discussion. Students approve of the use of testing by three to one. Put in the context of education reform, 65% of high school students think that testing students every year in grades three to eight to measure what they learned that year is a good idea. Only 27% disagree with using testing to measure academic achievement.

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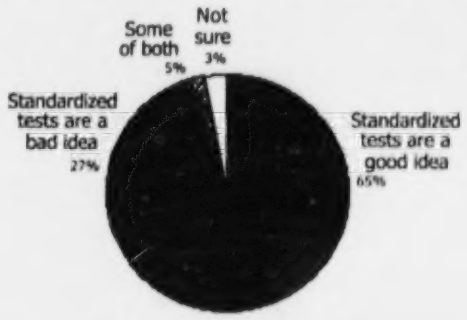
Students Support Standardized Testing

President Bush and Congress recently passed an education-reform bill that requires students to take a standardized test every year in grades three through eight to measure what they learned in their schools that year.



Although students convey their support for civic engagement at many other points in this year's survey, they somewhat resent being forced by their schools to do community service. Half (50%) of students say that it is a bad idea to require students to perform community service, because schools should focus on academics and students should be able to choose whether to volunteer. Students accept the mission to volunteer, but most reject the mandate.

Women agree with the concept of volunteering slightly more than do men. Those who attend private school are significantly more likely to say that requiring community service is a good idea than are those who attend public school, perhaps because the idea is not as new to them. Students who give their schools a higher grade and those who receive higher grades from their schools tend to accept a mandatory service requirement. Additionally, students who say that September 11 had a greater affect on their lives are more amenable to the idea of volunteering as a part of their graduation requirement.

STUDENTS' SUPPORT NETWORK IS STRONG

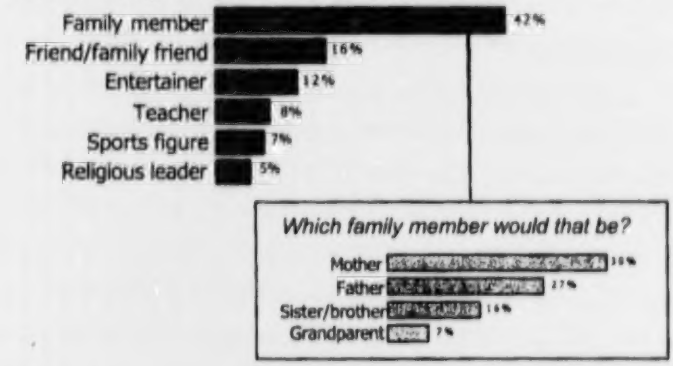
One of the most significant findings to emerge from last year's research was the remarkable degree to which high school students receive support from their schools, families, and friends. This level of support remains strong in 2002. At school, nine in ten (89%) students have a teacher or administrator who personally cares about their success and three in four (74%) students have a teacher or administrator to whom they can talk about personal problems. Similarly, 87% of students say that it is important to most of their teachers and administrators that they do their best in school.

The definition of a traditional two-parent American family applies in 54% of high school students' homes. Most students say that their families support them. Nine in ten (90%) students have a family member in whom they can confide and talk to about things. Three in ten (29%) students live in single-parent homes, and 8% of students live with someone other than their parents. Even in these nontraditional homes, however, students can identify a family member who supports them.

In fact, students are most likely to pick a family member as a role model. Forty-two percent of high school students say that if forced to pick just one person as a role model, they would choose a family member. Mothers receive the most mention, with 38% of students who identify a family member as a role model saying that their mother is their role model. Fathers follow with 27%, then brothers at 11%, and grandparents at 7%. Students in single-parent homes actually are slightly more likely to choose a family member as a role model (45%), and more likely to choose their mother as their role model (44%, compared with 38% of teenagers in two-parent households).

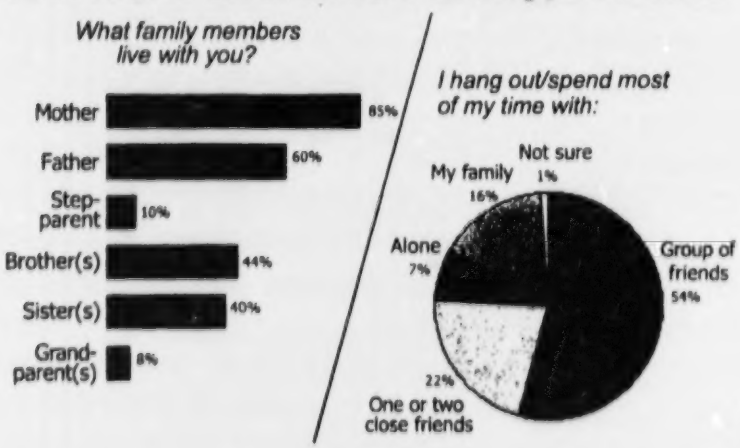
Family Members Top List Of Role Models

If you had to pick one person as a role model, in which of the following categories would that person be?



Most high school students have at least one or two close friends to depend on as well. More than half (54%) of students hang out with a group of friends, and 22% hang out with one or two close friends. Sixteen percent of students spend most of their free time with their family. Only 7% of students spend most of their time alone.

Network Includes Family/Friends

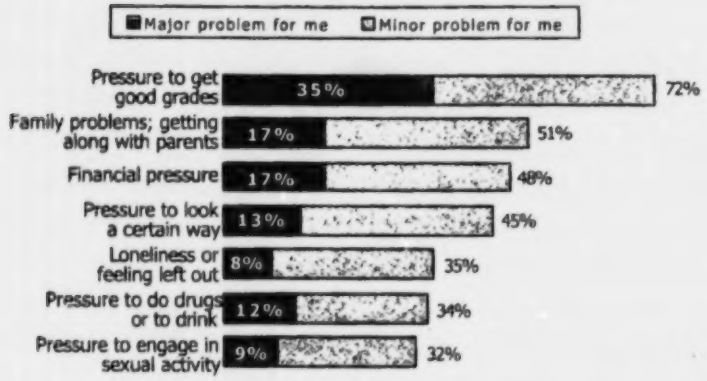


Students who spend their free time with family are much more likely to name a family member as a role model (60%). Students who spend their time with one or two close friends are more likely to name a friend or a family friend as their role model (21%, compared with 14% of those who say they hang out with a group of friends and 8% who spend their time with their family).

Of course, even strong support networks cannot entirely eliminate the pressures faced by today's high school students. Teenagers report feeling significantly more academic pressure than did last year's students. In 2001, 62% said that pressure to get good grades was a problem. This year, the proportion rises ten percentage points to 72%. The pressure to get good grades emerges as the biggest problem for high school students, with twice as many students saying that it is a major problem for them than any other problem tested. More than one-third (35%) of students say that getting good grades is a major problem, and a nearly equal proportion (37%) say that it is a minor problem. With students feeling the effects of a faltering economy and considering a college degree essential to their success, they seem to be putting more pressure on themselves to achieve academically in high school as a means of setting themselves up for success later in life.

The pressure to get good grades is felt at consistent levels across most demographic groups, with two notable exceptions. African-American students feel major academic pressure at significantly higher levels than do either white students or Hispanic students. The second difference falls across income levels. Students with higher family incomes are substantially more likely to say that they feel major pressure to get good grades, perhaps reflecting a greater pressure to attend college.

Students Feel Pressured In Many Areas



Other pressures felt by students remain at levels similar to last year. Seventeen percent of students say that getting along with their parents is a major problem for them, and that financial pressures are a major problem in their lives. Fewer, but still significant proportions, of students deal with major pressure to look a certain way (13%), pressure to do drugs or drink (12%), and pressure to engage in sexual activity (9%). Only 8% of students admit to having a major problem with loneliness or feeling left out of the crowd. One in five students admits to at least one problem, and 42% have four or more problems.

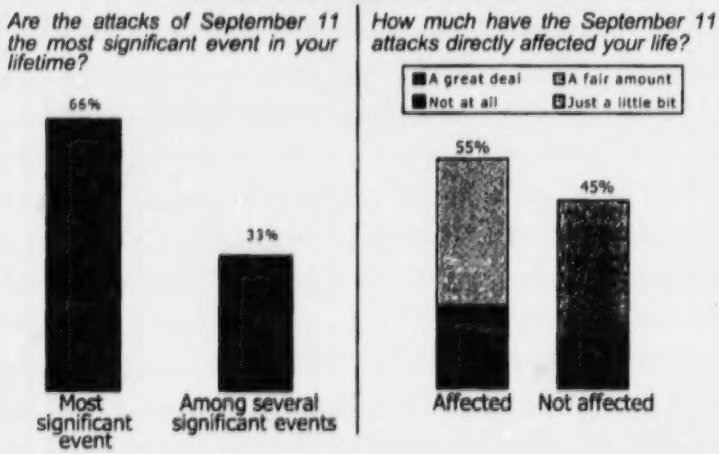
The support that students count on from their families and schools, however, affects the degree to which they feel many typical teenage pressures. Students with a family member to talk to are 12 points less likely to feel pressure, while students who have a teacher to whom they can talk are nine points less likely to be under pressure. Under-pressure students report at least three major or minor problems with getting good grades, their families, their finances, the way they look, temptation to take drugs or drink, pressure to engage in sexual activity, or loneliness.

EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11 ARE STILL FELT

In November 2001, Hart Research conducted a call-back survey among 308 students originally surveyed in May 2001, to gauge their feelings on the September 11 attacks and the events that followed. At that point, three in four (75%) students said that the September 11 attacks were the single-most significant event of their lifetime, even when directly compared with events such as the Gulf War, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine shootings, and President Clinton's impeachment.

In the six months that passed between the November survey and this most recent State of Our Nation's Youth, high school students have adopted a different outlook on the attacks. The proportion of students who say that the attacks were the single-most significant event of their lifetime has declined slightly to 66%. Certainly, for any one event to be chosen as the single-most significant by 66% of a generation speaks a great deal about its gravity. It is also telling, however, that fully one-third (33%) of students now put September 11 in a different perspective, saying that it was just one of several significant events they have witnessed.

Sept. 11 Waning In Salience, But Effects Still Felt



Younger students, although their lifetimes include the same comparative events, are more likely to say that September 11 is the most significant event in their lives. Freshman consider it the most significant event by a 46-point margin, while seniors consider it the most significant event by only a 27-point margin.

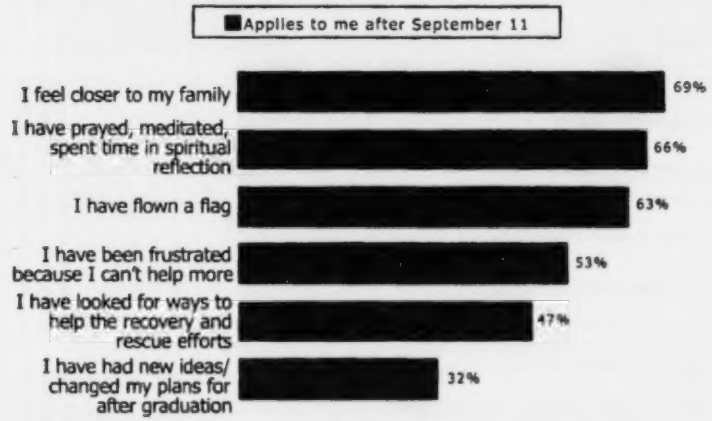
Despite a slip in significance, September 11 remains every bit as salient for students, and its effects carry the same weight. The November survey also asked students to gauge the extent to which the attacks directly affected their lives. The proportions saying that they were affected a great deal or a fair amount do not change between November and the current survey. Then, as now, one in five (20%) students say that the attacks directly affected their lives a great deal, and more than one-third (35%) say the attacks affected their lives a fair amount. Only 12% of students say their lives were not affected at all.

It is not surprising that the degree to which students were affected by the attacks corresponds with their geographic proximity to the areas that were attacked. Not a single student in the Northeast claims to be unaffected, while nearly one in five students living on the West Coast say they were affected only a little or not at all.

Although today's high school students have been affected profoundly by the attacks, they continue to react positively. For example, seven in ten (69%) students say that the attacks have brought them even closer to their families. Two-thirds (66%) of students have dealt with attacks by praying, meditating, or spending time in spiritual reflection. Indeed, students still show a desire to help with the recovery efforts (47%), and say they are frustrated because they cannot do more to help (53%).

In some cases, underclassmen react even more positively than do their junior and senior counterparts. In particular, freshmen are significantly more likely to say that they feel closer to their families, have flown a flag, and have had new ideas about what they would like to do after graduation. But when it comes to spending time in reflection, looking for ways to help, and feeling frustrated that they cannot do more, seniors are as likely to be affected as are freshmen.

Students Reacting To September 11 In Positive Ways

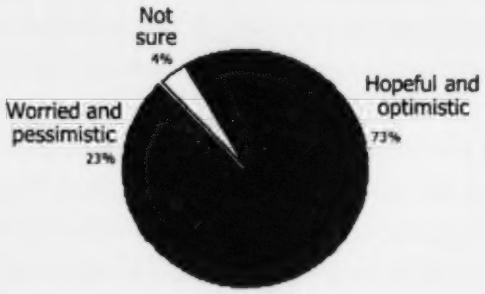

Applies to me after September 11
I feel closer to my family
69%
I have prayed, meditated, spent time in spiritual reflection
66%
I have flown a flag
63%
I have been frustrated because I can't help more
53%
I have looked for ways to help the recovery and rescue efforts
47%
I have had new ideas/ changed my plans for after graduation
32%

This attitude of positive reflection also extends into teenagers' schools. Fully half (50%) say that students became more friendly and considerate of one another in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. More remarkably, 14% say that even six months later, students in their schools are still friendlier and more considerate. Students who spend their time with a group of friends are more likely to have noticed a change for the better in their schools.

Students also refuse to let the attacks tarnish their outlook for the future. Three-quarters (73%) of students say that when they look ahead to the future of the country, they are mainly hopeful and optimistic. Only a quarter (23%) say they feel mainly worried and pessimistic, which is remarkable for an age group generally regarded as distrustful and gloomy. Even the prospect of mandatory military service does not dampen their sanguinity. Nearly six in ten students expect to see required military service in their lifetime.

Students Keeping A Positive Outlook After September 11

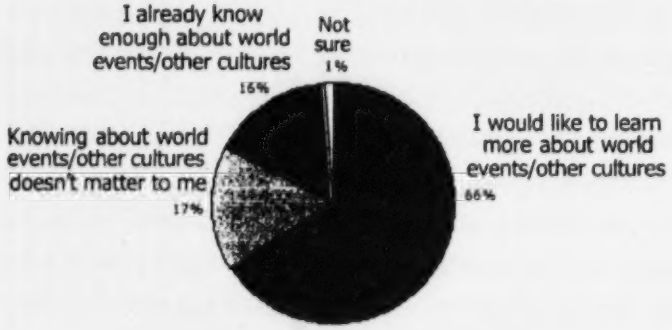
In thinking about the future of the country, I am:



College Is A Priority For The Future

Another effect of the September 11 attacks is students' desire to learn more about world events and other cultures. Two-thirds (66%) of students say that would like to learn more than they already know, and 58% of students believe that school, classwork, and assignments are an important source of that kind of information.

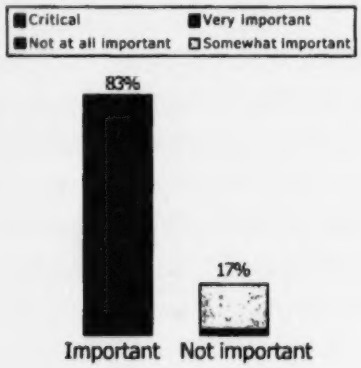
Learning About Current Events/ Other Cultures Important


I already know enough about world events/other cultures 16%
Not sure 1%
I would like to learn more about world events/other cultures 66%
Knowing about world events/other cultures doesn't matter to me 17%

This interest in other cultures no doubt contributes to students' belief that college is an important part of their future and their intention to pursue a degree. This belief carries over from the 2001 survey. Three in ten (30%) students say that graduating from college is critical to their success later in life. Additionally, slightly more than half (53%) of students say that college is very important. Seventeen percent of students say that college is only somewhat or not at all important.

Students Regard College As Important For The Future

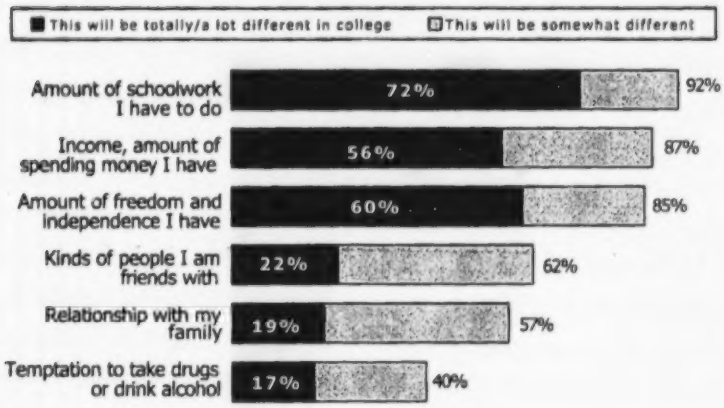
When it comes to being successful later in life, how important is it for people today to graduate from college?



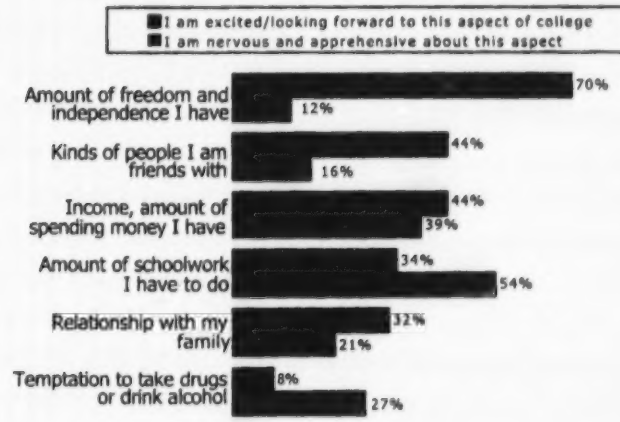
Taking all of this into account, 89% of students plan to attend some type of college after they graduate from high school. Two-thirds (66%) of students plan to attend a traditional four-year college or university, while 11% say they either do not plan to go to college or have not yet decided whether they will go. The remaining 23% of students plan to attend a two-year college, a vocational school, or a community college.

When college-bound students think about what will be different in college, the amount of school work they have to do is the first thing that comes to mind. More than seven in ten (72%) students say that they expect the amount of schoolwork they will face in college to be either totally different or a lot different. Students also expect their freedom (60%) and their income (56%) to be a lot different. The things students expect to stay the same include their familial relationships (42% no different) and the temptation to take drugs or alcohol (59%).

Students Expect College To Be Different



Students Are Both Excited And Nervous About College



Students feel a mixture of excitement and apprehension about these changes. They look forward to the new freedom and independence that they expect (70% of those who expect it to be different), but are nervous and apprehensive about the amount of schoolwork they will have to do (53% of those who expect it to be different). Students are divided on their expectations for changes in their income (44% excited, 39% nervous), and changes in their familial relationships (32%, 21%).

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By the time a students reaches his or her senior year, the excitement of new freedoms and independence seems to wear off, making room for increased worries in other areas. They become much more worried about their incomes and spending money, as well as what will happen to their family relationships once they get to college. This shift reflects a maturing student body, and increasing pragmatism as students move through the grades.

For the most part, practical concerns govern students' choices about what college they will attend. Given a choice between attending a school far away from where they live and attending a school within driving distance, 56% of students choose a school within driving distance. Given a choice between attending a top school with loans and attending a school with a lesser reputation but without loans, 51% choose a school they could afford without having to take out loans.

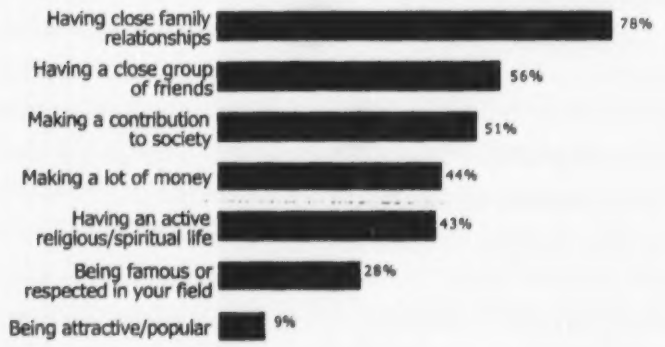
Thinking about the kind of degree that will serve them best in the working world, students choose a professional degree over a liberal arts degree by two to one (62% to 32%). They believe that training for a specific profession is more practical than being prepared for a broad range of professions. Students who spend free time with their families are the most likely to believe in the value of a professional degree.

Practical Concerns Guide College Choices

- 66% of students regard learning a profession or trade and being able to get a good-paying job as the best reason to go to college.
- 56% of students would rather attend college within driving distance of home.
- 51% of students would prefer to attend a school with a lesser reputation rather than take out loans to go to a school that has a top reputation.
- By 62% to 32%, students believe that a professional degree will better prepare them for life after college than will a liberal arts degree.

Relationships Define Success In Life

(% saying each is very important in their definition of success)



Regardless of where students see themselves in the future, strong relationships still define success for most of today's high school students. Nearly eight in ten (78%) students say that having strong family relationships is very important to their definitions of success, and 56% say the same about having a close group of friends. In the same vein, half (51%) of students say that contributing to society is a very important element of success.

A lot happened during the 2001-2002 academic year to make students ponder. The attacks of September 11, the launch of America's war on terror, both provided a dose of the real world for today's high school students. Students are reacting strongly to these events, but they are reacting in ways that show them to be at once realistic and optimistic. They recognize that today's world is confronted by serious challenges, but they are prepared to meet them all.

METHODOLOGY

The 2002 State of Our Nation's Youth survey was conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, one of the leading survey research firms in the United States. Now in its 30th year of operation, the firm has conducted well over 5,000 public opinion surveys, and has administered and analyzed interviews among more than three million individuals in that time. Hart Research also has undertaken more than 4,000 focus group sessions.

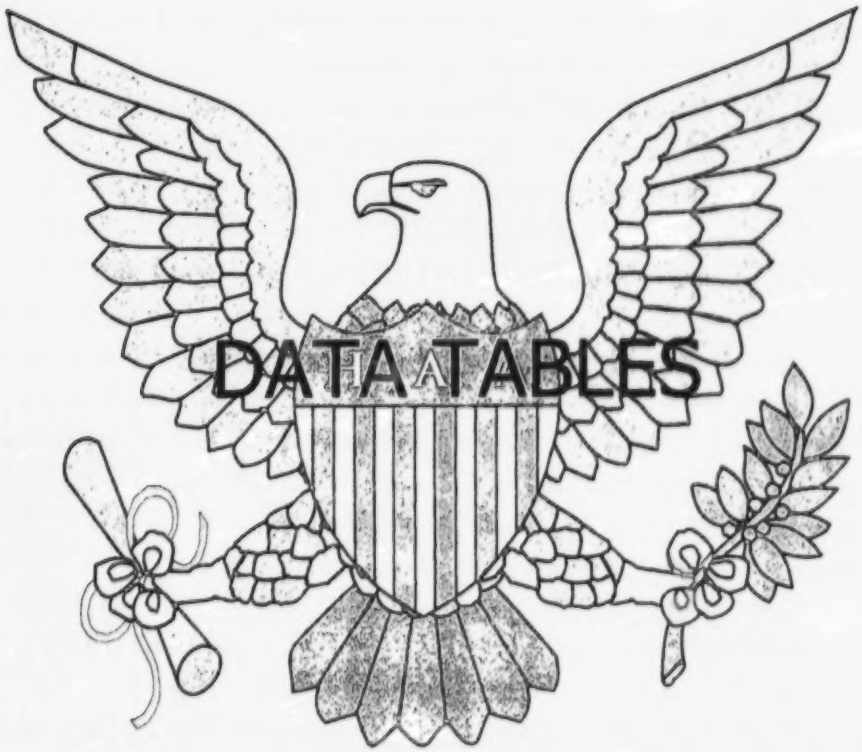
Since 1989, Hart Research, in conjunction with Robert Teeter's Coldwater Corporation, has conducted the public opinion surveys for NBC News and *The Wall Street Journal*. This represents the first time any outside firm was retained by a network to conduct surveys that bear the name of the sponsoring organization. These surveys are widely regarded as barometers of American opinion.

Peter D. Hart Research Associates conducted the 2002 State of Our Nation's Youth survey from May 1 to 29, 2002. The survey was conducted by telephone among 1,003 students across the country. The sample for this poll was by selecting 505 geographic points randomly and proportionate to the population of each region and, within each region, by size of place. Individuals were selected in accordance with a probability sample design that gives all telephone numbers an equal chance to be included.

One student from each household was included, selected by a systematic procedure to provide an approximate balance of respondents by sex. Only students age 13 to 18 who identified themselves as ninth through twelfth graders, or freshmen through seniors in high school, were accepted as survey respondents.

The data's statistical margin of sampling error is ±3.1 percentage points among all students at the 95% confidence level, although sample tolerances for subgroups are larger and sampling error is just one form of error or bias that can affect survey results. Minimal weights have been applied to sex and year in school.

The data reported here are the property of the Horatio Alger Association, which must be credited whenever these results are cited.


DATA TABLES

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY AGE	
	High School Students %
12 years old or younger	-
13 years old	1
14 years old	11
15 years old	25
16 years old	25
17 years old	22
18 years old	12
19 years old	4
20 years old or older	-
Not sure/refused	-
How old are you?	

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY GRADE	
	High School Students %
Ninth grade/freshman in high school	30
Tenth grade/sophomore in high school	26
Eleventh grade/junior in high school	23
Twelfth grade/senior in high school	21
Other (VOL)	-
Not sure	-
What year or grade in school are you currently in? If you've already finished the school year, what grade did you just complete?	

Distribution Of Students By School Type

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Public school	85	87
Private religious school	9	7
Private non-religious school	2	3
Other type of school	2	2
Boarding school	1	NA
Taught by parents/home school	1	1
Not sure	-	-

What type of school do you attend--is it a boarding school, a public school, a private religious school, a private non-religious school, another type of school, or are you taught by your parents?

Hours Per Week Spent Doing Homework

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
1 to 5 hours	60	56
6 to 10 hours	25	26
11 to 15 hours	7	9
16 to 20 hours	3	3
More than 20 hours	2	3
None (VOL)	NA	2
Not sure	3	1

About how many hours a week would you say you spend doing homework?

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Self-reported Grades On Last Report Card

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Mostly A's	22	20
Mostly B's	8	8
A mix of A's and B's	35	33
Mostly C's	6	7
A mix of B's and C's	23	26
Most were below C	6	6
Not sure/refused	--	-

Which of these choices comes the closest to describing the grades you received on your last report card?

Involvement In School Activities

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Very involved	28	29
Somewhat involved	44	50
Not that involved	15	14
Not involved at all	12	7
Not sure	1	-

Thinking about the activities you participate in and the time you spend at school, how involved would you say you are in your school--very involved, somewhat involved, not that involved, or not involved at all?

Work During School Year

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Yes	38	43
No	62	57
Not sure	-	-

Did you have a job during this school year?

Students Grade Their Schools

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
A	17	20
B	51	48
C	22	22
D	6	6
F	3	4
Not sure	1	-
GradePoint Average	*2.7*	*2.7*

If you could give your school a grade from A to F, what grade would you give it?

STANDARDIZED TESTS: GOOD OR BAD IDEA?	High School Students %
Tests are a good idea	65
Tests are a bad idea	27
Some of both (VOL)	5
Not sure	3

President Bush and Congress recently passed an education-reform bill that requires students to take a standardized test every year in grades three through eight to measure what they learned in their schools that year. Do you think that these standardized tests are a good idea or a bad idea to measure student progress?

ATTITUDE TOWARD REQUIRED COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS BEFORE GRADUATING	High School Students %
Statement A/good idea to require service	47
Statement B/bad idea to require service	50
Some of both (VOL)	3
Not sure	-

Many high schools in the country now require their students to do a certain number of community service hours before they graduate. Which of these two statements comes closer to your view about required community service?

Statement A: It is a good idea to require students to perform community service, because it guarantees that all students have experience volunteering before they graduate and the community benefits.

Statement B: It is a bad idea to require students to perform community service, because schools should focus on academics and students should be able to choose whether they want to volunteer or not.

Importance Of Having A College Degree

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Critical	30	35
Very important	53	49
Somewhat important	15	14
Not at all important	2	2
Not sure	-	-

When it comes to being successful later in life, how important do you think it is for people today to graduate from college--is it critical, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important?

Is Homework A Priority?

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Statement A/homework is a priority	45	44
Statement B/never have the time for homework	48	49
Some of both (VOL)	6	6
Not sure	1	1

Here are two statements about homework. Please tell me which one comes closer to your opinion.

Statement A: Doing homework is a priority for me. I complete it before participating in other activities.

Statement B: I know I should do more homework, but I never seem to have the time.

Concern And Availability Of Teachers, Administrators, And Family

	High School Students		
	Applies To Me %	Does Not Apply %	Not Sure %
There is at least one family member who I can confide in and talk to about things			
May 2002	90	10	-
May 2001	90	10	-
There is at least one teacher or administrator who personally cares about my success			
May 2002	89	10	1
May 2001	89	10	1
It is important to most of my teachers and administrators that I do my best in school			
May 2002	87	12	1
May 2001	87	11	2
There is at least one teacher or administrator who I can talk to about my school problems			
May 2002	74	26	-
May 2001	71	28	1

I'm going to read you some statements, and for each one, please tell me whether it applies to you or does not apply to you.

Is Your School Keeping You Safe?

	High School Students %
Yes, school is doing enough	81
No, school is not doing enough	17
Not sure	2

Do you feel that your school is doing enough to keep you safe and secure during the school day, or do you not feel that your school is doing enough?

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What More Could Your School Do To Keep You Safe?

	High School Students %
Keep drugs out of your school	35
Stop bullies from picking on other students	26
Screen students to make sure they are not carrying weapons into school	24
Prevent outside people from getting into your school during the day	19
Offer more classes to teach tolerance and to resolve disputes	18
None (VOL)	1
Other (VOL)	4
Not sure	1

In which one or two of the following areas would you say your school could do more to keep you safe and secure?

Outlook For The Future Of The Country

	High School Students %
Hopeful and optimistic	73
Worried and pessimistic	23
Not sure	4

When you think about the future of the country, would you say that you are mainly hopeful and optimistic, or mainly worried and pessimistic?

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Interest In Learning More About World Events And Other Cultures

	High School Students %
Already know enough	16
Would like to learn more	66
Doesn't really matter	17
Not sure	1

Thinking about world events and the cultures of people who live outside the United States, do you already know enough about them, would you like to learn more about them, or doesn't it really matter to you whether you know about world events or other cultures?

Importance Of Selected Sources Of Information About World Events And Other Cultures

	High School Students			
	Very Important Source Of Information %	Somewhat Important Source Of Information %	Not An Important Source Of Information %	Not Sure %
School, classwork, and assignments	58	36	6	-
Independent research, such as searching on the Internet or going to the library	50	43	7	-
Television, newspapers, and magazines	48	43	9	-

I'd like you to tell me how important each of the following things is to you as a source of information about world events and cultures outside the United States--a very important source, a somewhat important source, or not an important source?

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Significance Of The September 11 Attacks In Students' Lifetime

	High School Students %
Most significant event	66
One of several significant events	33
Not sure	1

Compared with some things that have happened in America since you were born, such as the Gulf War, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine shootings, and the impeachment of President Clinton, would you say that the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon is the most significant event in your lifetime or just one of several significant events?

Direct Effect Of The September 11 Attacks On Students' Lives

	High School Students %
Affected me a great deal	20
Affected me a fair amount	35
Affected me just a little bit	33
Have not affected me at all	12
Not sure	-

How much would you say the attacks have directly affected your life--a great deal, a fair amount, just a little bit, or not at all?

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Ways In Which The September 11 Attacks Have Affected Students

	High School Students		
	Applies To Me %	Does Not Apply %	Not Sure %
I feel closer to my family	69	31	-
I have prayed, meditated, or spent time in spiritual reflection	66	34	-
I have flown a flag	63	36	1
I have been frustrated because I can't do more to help	53	45	2
I have looked for a way to help the recovery and rescue effort	47	52	1
I have had new ideas or changed my plans for after graduation	32	67	1

Here are some statements about things that people may have experienced, thought, or done since September 11. For each one, please tell me whether it applies to you or not.* (** Asked of one-half the respondents)*

Were Students More Friendly Toward One Another AfterThe September 11 Attacks?

	High School Students %
Was true for a while, but is not true anymore	50
Is still true	14
Was never true/nothing changed	34
Not sure	2

Some students say that after the attacks, the students in their schools were more friendly and considerate of one another. Would you say that this was true in your school for a while but that things have gone back to the way they were before September 11, that this was true after September 11 and is still true today, or that nothing changed after September 11 in your school?

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Will Young Americans Be Required To Serve In The Military?

	High School Students %
Yes, young Americans will be required to serve	57
No, young Americans will not be required to serve	36
Depends (VOL)	3
Not sure	4

During your lifetime, do you think that there will be a time when young Americans will be required to serve in the military to defend the country, or not?

Family Members In The Home

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Mother	85	88
Father	60	63
Brother(s)	44	45
Sister(s)	40	42
Stepparent(s)	10	10
Grandparent(s)	8	8
Stepsibling(s)	2	2
Other	8	5
Not sure/refused	1	-

What family members live with you?

STUDENTS' SOCIAL LIVES

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
I have a group of friends I hang out with	54	69
I hang out with only one or two close friends	22	19
I spend most of my time with my family	16	7
I spend most of my time alone	7	3
Other (VOL)	NA	2
Not sure	1	-

Which of the following statements best describes you?

STUDENTS' CHOICES OF ROLE MODELS

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Family member	42	46
Friend/family friend	16	16
Entertainment/artist or writer	12	12
Teacher/educator	8	7
Sports	7	7
Religious leader	5	6
Political leader	4	2
Business leader	3	3
Other (VOL)	1	-
Not sure	2	1

Please think about one particular person whom you would consider a role model. If you had to pick one person as a role model, which of the following categories would your role model be in?

FAMILY MEMBERS CHOSEN AS ROLE MODELS

(among those who choose a family member as a role model)

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Mother	38	40
Father	27	26
Brother	11	7
Grandparent	7	9
Aunt/uncle	6	6
Sister	5	7
Cousin	3	3
Other (VOL)	1	1
Not sure	2	1

What family member do you consider a role model?

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PRESSURE

	High School Students			
	Major Problem %	Minor Problem %	Not A Problem %	Not Sure %
Pressure to get good grades [1]				
May 2002	35	37	28	-
May 2001	26	36	38	-
Family problems, or not getting along with your parents				
May 2002	17	34	49	-
May 2001	14	32	54	-
Financial pressure				
May 2002	17	31	52	-
May 2001	15	27	57	1
Pressure to look a certain way [1]				
May 2002	13	32	55	-
May 2001	16	30	53	1
Pressure to do drugs or to drink				
May 2002	12	22	66	-
May 2001	12	24	64	-
Pressure to engage in sexual activity before you are ready				
May 2002	9	23	68	-
May 2001	10	20	69	1
Loneliness or feeling left out				
May 2002	8	27	64	1
May 2001	9	24	67	-

The following are problems that some high school students face. For each one I read, please tell me whether it is a major problem for you, a minor problem for you, or not a problem for you.

[1] In May 2001, this item was phrased "Too much pressure..."

Most Difficult Item For Students To Give Up

	High School Students %
Cell phone	36
E-mail	29
MTV	17
None/depends (VOL)	17
Not sure	1

Which one of the following things would be the hardest for you to give up for one month--e-mail, MTV, or a cell phone?

Entertainment Media's Perceived Effect On Young People's Values And Morals

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Negative effect	42	46
Positive effect	18	11
No effect	31	36
Not sure	9	7

Would you say that the entertainment media today, such as music, movies, television, and video games, have a negative effect, a positive effect, or no effect on the values and morals of young people?

PLANS FOR COLLEGE

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Yes, plan to go to a four-year college or university	66	68
Yes, plan to go to a two-year college or university	10	7
Yes, plan to go to a training or vocational school	5	6
Yes, plan to go to a community college	8	7
Yes, not sure what kind of college (VOL)	NA	4
No, do not plan to go to college	6	5
Not sure	5	3

Do you plan to go to college sometime after you graduate from high school? **(IF "YES," ASK:)** Which of the following best describes the kind of college you plan to go to--a four-year college or university, a two-year college or university, a training or vocational school, or a community college?

HOW MUCH WILL COLLEGE LIFE BE DIFFERENT?

	High School Students				
	Totally Different %	A Lot Different %	Somewhat Different %	No Different %	Not Sure %
The amount of schoolwork you have to do	36	36	20	8	-
The amount of freedom and independence you have	32	28	25	14	1
Your income, or the amount of spending money you have	32	24	31	12	1
The kinds of people you are friends with	12	10	40	37	1
Your relationship with your family	7	12	38	42	1
The temptation to take drugs or drink alcohol	7	10	23	59	1

I'd like you to think for a minute about how different you expect your life to be in college compared with how your life is now. For each of the following aspects, please tell me whether you expect your life to be totally different in college, a lot different in college, somewhat different in college, or no different in college

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Students' Excitement/Apprehension About Selected Ways That College Life Will Be Different

	High School Students			
	Excited And Looking Forward To This Change %	Nervous And Apprehensive About This Change %	Not Sure %	Won't Be Different/ Not Sure (Q.29a) %
The amount of freedom and independence you have	70	12	3	15
The kinds of people you are friends with	44	16	2	38
Your income or the amount of spending money you have	44	39	4	13
The amount of schoolwork you have to do	34	54	4	8
Your relationship with your family	32	21	4	43
The temptation to take drugs or drink alcohol	8	27	5	60

And would you say that this change is something that you are excited about and looking forward to, or something that you are nervous and apprehensive about?

Most Important Reasons For Attending College Or Vocational School

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Learning a profession or trade and being able to get a good-paying job	66	61
Being independent and living on my own	31	29
Being able to make a difference or change things for the better	24	27
Meeting new people and having fun	24	15
Not sure	1	-

Here are some reasons that people might give for going to college or vocational school. Please tell me which one or two reasons are the most important to you.

Students' Plans For Financing Their Education

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Scholarships	48	57
Parents will pay	32	42
A job outside school	31	40
Student loans	24	32
Grants	15	21
A school-sponsored job/work study	8	18
Other (VOL)	2	3
Not sure	3	3

In which of the following ways do you plan to finance your education?

Preference For College's Proximity To Home

	High School Students %
Prefer school far away	41
Prefer school within driving distance	56
Not sure	3

If you had a choice, would you rather attend a school far away from where you live now, or would you rather attend a school within driving distance of where you live now?* *(* Asked of one-half the respondents)*

Impact Of Cost On Choice Of School

	High School Students %
Prefer school with top reputation, even if it means taking out loans	46
Prefer school with lesser reputation and no loans	51
Not sure	3

If you had a choice, would you rather attend a school with a top reputation even if it meant taking out loans, or would you rather attend a school with a lesser reputation that you could afford to pay for without loans?* *(* Asked of one-half the respondents.)*

Which Degree Better Prepares Students For Life After College?

	High School Students %
Liberal arts degree	32
Professional degree	62
Depends (VOL)	4
Not sure	2

Some college students decide to work toward a liberal arts degree that teaches them about various subjects and prepares them for a broad range of professions. Other college students decide to work toward a professional degree that gives them the skills for one specific profession. Regardless of which kind of degree you plan to pursue, which kind of degree do you think better prepares college students for life after college--a liberal arts degree or a professional degree?

Definitions Of Success

	High School Students			
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not At All Important %	Not Sure %
Having close family relationships				
May 2002 *	78	18	4	-
May 2001	84	13	3	-
Having a close group of friends				
May 2002 *	56	34	10	-
May 2001	60	30	10	-
Making a contribution to society				
May 2002 *	51	42	7	-
May 2001	49	44	7	-
Making a lot of money at your job				
May 2002 *	44	43	13	-
May 2001	35	49	16	-
Having an active religious or spiritual life				
May 2002 *	43	33	24	-
May 2001	44	35	20	1
Being famous or respected in your field				
May 2002 *	28	45	27	-
May 2001	27	44	29	-
Being attractive and popular				
May 2002 *	9	40	51	-
May 2001	8	39	53	-

People today define success in lots of ways. For each of the following, please tell me how important the item is in your personal definition of success in life--very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. *(*Asked of one-half the respondents)*

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PARENTS' COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

	High School Students %
Yes, mother/stepmother attended college	23
Yes, father/stepfather attended college	12
Yes, both/all attended college	33
No, none attended college	29
Not sure	3

Has either of your parents or stepparents gone to college?

TYPE OF AREA

	High School Students %
City	32
Suburb	26
Small town	30
Rural area	10
Not sure	2

What is the best way to describe the area where you live--a city, a suburb, a small town, or a rural area?

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PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY'S INCOME	High School Students %
Far below average	3
Slightly below average	17
Just about average	41
Slightly above average	30
Far above average	5
Not sure	4

Compared with other American families, would you say that your family's income is far below average, slightly below average, just about average, slightly above average, or far above average?

ETHNIC BACKGROUND	High School Students %
Hispanic	14
White	60
Black	16
Asian	3
Other	6
Not sure	1

And finally, are you from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background? **(IF "NO," ASK:)** What is your race--white, black, Asian, or something else?

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Mission
OF THE HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

To recognize contemporary role models whose experiences exemplify that opportunities for a successful life are available to all individuals who are dedicated to the principles of integrity, hard work, perseverance, and compassion for others.

To provide scholarship assistance to deserving young people who have demonstrated integrity and determination in overcoming adversity in their lives and who have shown the academic potential and personal aspiration to make a unique contribution to society.

To educate America's youth about limitless possibilities that are available through the American free enterprise system and to underscore the importance of service to others.

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Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc.
99 Canal Center Plaza
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone (703) 684-9444 FAX: (703) 684-9445
htttp://www.horatioalger.com

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